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JAPAN IN THE WORLD WAR

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

IN 1852, President Fillmore reshaped the history of the world. By Perry's peaceful expedition to Japan, the United States was thrust westward and forward towards Asia and the scene of humanity's future activities. In relatively the same position as that in which England was placed after the discovery of America, our country now found herself. Japan was given new life. The Mikado was exalted from a cloistered hermit to be an Emperor. Russia was speeded on her race to the Pacific. In the land-hunger and desire of Czarism, to rule the largest area of the earth's surface, the bloated fancy of the Muscovite was that his military power excelled any on earth. Fillmore's policy changed all this.

Japan, when suddenly awakened, found herself surrounded by ravening Powers that looked on all Asian territory as so much prey to be rent and devoured. By the treaty of Aigun, in 1857, forced with almost Satanic diplomacy, Russia sheared off a piece of China as large as France, and faced the Pacific. Old Russia's diplomatic procedures bore a remarkable resemblance to the German military methods of today. The Great Bear's paws were now planted on Saghalien, Japan's most northern island. This bit of land, the size of New York State, valuable for its timber, furs and fisheries, was of old outlined on European maps as undetached, and part of the mainland. Known to the Japanese in the sixteenth century, it was in 1808-1809 explored, mapped, and proved by them to be an island.

On the continent, amid the forests which clothed to the water's edge both mountain and plain—after enough of the tigers had been shot off—a Russian city was built and given a name that was in itself a defiant challenge: Vladivostok,

Dominion of the East. Soon after this the Czar's naval base was moved from Kamschatka to this place. Since the Russians possessed Alaska and the Aleutian islands, the waters of the northern Pacific were to become a Russian lake. Not yet satisfied, a Russian man-of-war seized Tsushima, and a Japanese soldier was killed while resisting. The Czar's marines then proceeded to plant the fields for food in anticipation of a long stay. Japan invoked the aid of the British navy and recovered her twin islands. Next the magnificent harbor of Masanpo in Korea, in sight of the coast of Nippon, was coveted and ultimately occupied, until British diplomacy compelled the Russians to evacuate.

Amid such politics and diplomacy, New Japan was born. Who should be her friend? In 1866, she sent her initial mission of remonstrance to St. Petersburg. There, bleatings were met with growls. Getting no satisfaction, the Land of Great Peace must revert to tusk and claw in order to live.

Whether sword or pen be the mightier has been for ages the theme of debate. In that same year, 1866, one Yokoi, admirer of Jesus of Syria and Lincoln of America, sent his two nephews to Rutgers College. Opening a new era in the relations between Orient and Occident, he started a long procession of passionate pilgrims to the shrines of western knowledge. This has not yet ceased. In 1918 there are in the colleges and universities of the United States seven thousand students from a hundred nations. In Japan, by a critical estimate, ten thousand Japanese can speak English well, and one hundred thousand read it. Yokoi's nephews were asked why they came so far. Their prompt answer was "To learn how to make big cannon, so we shall not be conquered by Russia."

In the end, brains won over force and the little one became a strong nation. Three years later, in Kyoto, Yokoi was assassinated for his liberal, or "evil," opinions. Yet not until he had won four victories. He established education as the cheap defense of the nation. He secured toleration of religion. He raised to manhood and citizenship one million outcasts, for ages unreckoned as human; and, finally, as Tacitus would say, "a brave man earns his death."

When in 1868 Japan had to create, out of feudalistic factions, a true nation, pigmy Korea insulted Japan for being recreant to Oriental culture. The samurai, made furi-

ous, clamored for war. Iwakura and Okubo, heads of the embassy, returning in 1874 from America and Europe, opposed invasion then, because Japan would "play into the hands of Russia." The cost of this prudence was the assassination of both statesmen and the terrible civil war of 1877.

In any case, Russia meant advance. In 1895, the Czar's envoy, de Rosen, of Huguenot ancestry, played a secret game in Tokyo, under the very nose of the British minister, Sir Harry Parkes; who was wrathful enough when he found himself hoodwinked. Enomoto had gone to the Czar's capital only to come home shorn. De Rosen had all of Saghalien ceded to Russia. "In exchange," territory, already belonging to Japan, the Kuriles—the Smokers, sterile islands, which when not lost in volcanic clouds, were usually invisible in fog—were condescendingly "given" her.

Of his worthless bargain, Enomoto, as we remember well, was proud. He waxed eloquent in voice and print, urging that all should be silent and acquiesce. Yet while no man, Japanese or other, was still alive who remembers the time when Saghalien was on the maps as joined to the continent, its insular character being unsuspected, there were extant some who called the "Straits of Tartary" the "Mamiya Straits," after the Japanese explorer, Rinzo Mamiya. In a long, narrow boat, especially constructed, Mamiya, in 1808 and 1809, had sailed past the Amur River as far as Nanio village, 53° 8'. He saw, expanding to the northward, the Saghalien Gulf, with Siberia on the left and the island, now first demonstrated to be such, on the right. Japan's abundant literature shows how well Saghalien was known and utilized by them even in the sixteenth century.

After Russia made a penal colony of this island, subsequent events are well known. When victorious in her war with China, Russia, Germany and France pounced upon exhausted Japan, to bar her access to the Asian continent. For since Japan woke up, to become a trading nation, after the Townsend Harris treaty of 1859, her hope and idea, which has ever dominated her policy, was to keep the trade routes to Europe open. Hers has ever been the "open-door" policy.

It was a dramatic event, with elements of comedy because of the contrast, when, on that April morning, in 1895, the little Japanese steam tug at Chefoo, bearing Japan's

olive branch to China in the form of a treaty of peace, ploughed her way through the thick smoke, raised by the big guns of the battle fleets of the three Powers. Coercive noise drowned Japan's still, small voice. In lieu of a foothold on the continent, Japan—even after the Mikado had proclaimed, on May 3, the Chinese treaty—was compelled to retrocede Liao Tung and to take Formosa and an indemnity in money. This latter was promptly invested, in British shipyards, to buy the best built battleships. Ten years later, in Togo's onset, these sunk some of the very vessels which had been active in the coercion of 1895. In the second sea fight, the Baltic fleet was ruined, within sight of where the Tsushima soldier of 1861 had been killed.

Following the Cassini treaty of 1876 and the Pavlof convention of 1898 with China, a railway was built across Manchuria with terminals at Vladivostok and Dalny. Here, with lofty store warehouses and granite docks for commerce, a costly city was built, when there were not one thousand Russians east of Lake Baikal engaged in trade. By 1901 the iron road through Chinese territory—that is, military penetration with thousands of soldiers as guards, was completed.

Events followed in Korea, which meant bloodshed for Japanese sailors. Mistaken for Americans or Frenchmen, because of their uniform, they were fired on and some were killed. The memories of our Admiral John Rodgers and the hostilities of 1871 were thus unpleasantly recalled. Japan sought redress from Korea by treaty making, after the Fillmore-Perry model of 1876.

Then followed the outlay, by Japan, of millions in the hope of making Korea a modern state. After the war with China, in 1894, millions more were devoted to recreate the weak country as a strong buffer state—the Belgium of the East.

The great grandson of a Dutchman, De Witte, and his backers sought moderation. They honestly tried to have Russia become a trading nation, with commerce on the Pacific. Opposing them was a ring of nobles, eager for predatory wealth. In their eyes, Korea was but loot, to be exploited for personal advantage. Yet the permanent holding of Masanpo by Russia, attempted in 1901, would have been a death blow to Japan. Because of this, Ito plainly told De Witte that “for Korea Japan would fight.” When

in 1904 the Russian clique trespassed on Korean territory, seeking her timber and mines, Japan, after failing to get redress in St. Petersburg, declared war for self-defense. An army, graduated from Japan's public schools begun by Americans, faced a host, in which but one man in a dozen could read or write. The scientific plans made in Tokyo by Kodama were executed, like clockwork, by Oyama in the field and Togo on the sea. The bubble-myth of the Muscovite's colossal invincibility burst. The Franco-Russian entente was a dream.

From that day began the sensational increase of Germany's budgets, fleets and armies, with pressure on France; the Agadir affair and the Algeçiras conference being incidents. In 1913 the writer, in passing over most of the area of the present battle line, inferred from ominous signs that war was imminent with Belgium to be the first sufferer. One fresh story was of a secret railway from Germany, laid under the sand, and capable of being uncovered and made efficient within a day. It was complete to within a few rods of the Belgian frontier.

On the other hand, Japan and Russia quickly made up their quarrel, reared by mutual agreement, at Port Arthur, a monument to the slain of both armies, negotiated several treaties, the envoys of either country being warmly welcomed in the respective capitals, while coöperating—perhaps at China's expense—in railway expansion. Japan's consistent policy has been to keep open the land trade routes to Europe.

Like a bolt from a cloudless sky came, in July, 1914, the news of hostilities in Europe. The French, Russian and British ambassadors in Tokyo met at once to invite and to limit the work of Britain's ally. The Anglo-Japanese alliance, renewed in July, 1911, but exempting the United States from its action, was invoked. Within six months Japan, with three divisions under General Kamio, consisting of 20,000 men, with 142 guns, and aided by the blockading fleet, had captured Tsingtau in China and later all the German colonies in the Pacific, sent a fleet of destroyers to the Mediterranean, convoyed the French and British transports conveying laborers and troops from China, Annam, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, assisted the British to quell a mutiny at Singapore, cleared the Pacific of German raiders, despatched three staffs of nurses and phy-

sicians to England, France and Russia, sent over a million rifles, with ammunition for small arms and artillery and kept the Osaka factories working night and day in supplying these, besides boots, hats, blankets, clothing and various supplies for the Russian army. When the Allies were pressed hardest at Verdun and on the Western front, Japan's energies relieved the strain. By submarines, and in the Tsingtau operations, with other accidents of war, her army and navy suffered a total of over three thousand casualties.

After the first burst, excepting naval activities and the continuous forwarding of supplies, the attitude of the Japanese people, in mass, was much like that of the Americans before April, 1917. Japan was not invited by the Allies to send an army to the Western front, even if finance, shipping and a sufficiency of up-to-date requirements had permitted her to accept. Moreover, as the man on the street reasoned, why should she help on "the white man's war," when all his home lands and colonies shut out the Japanese? Neither in Japan, nor in America, was war's sting felt in the vitals, though the former continued to lose both merchant and warships by the German submarines.

The upset in Russia, the accumulation of stores at Vladivostok, requiring some months for removal, and, finally, the loss of Japanese lives in the turbulence, forced the Tokyo Government's hand. A small guard of marines was landed, but Japan, ever the object of unreasoning suspicion—largely through race repulsions and because a "guilty conscience needs no accuser"—would not move, until, ever loyal to her policy of honesty, she obtained the consent of the Allies. In 1900, she could, single-handed and within a fortnight from landing the Hiroshima division, have reached Peking and cleared out the Boxers. But no! Russia and the Allies compelled Japan, and civilization, and the beleaguered foreigners in Peking to wait—almost to the time when the baby killers and women violators of the Kaiser had arrived from Germany. In 1918, she could, long ago, in the name of the Allies, have restored order in Siberia; and, with order, would have come schools, hygiene, freedom of conscience, and modern essential democracy, while acting as trustee of the coming league of nation. Fifty-two years of acquaintance with her history, spirit, literature, people, rules and finance, form the foundation of our faith.

As soon as President Wilson and the heads of the Powers

were assured of Japan's willingness to be but one member of the group for intervention, Japan sent three divisions under General Otani.

Of what has been accomplished, let not Japanese, but our own Lieut.-Colonel Morrow, tell. In a telegram, replying to Baron Uyehara, chief of staff, in Tokyo and made public September 27, the American said:

"I thank you for the undeserved compliment. General Otani's campaign on the Ussuri River has been truly remarkable. He landed on August 19 and fought brilliantly and successfully on August 24. By September 5 he had moved his army 420 miles and had captured Khabarovsk. This was an accomplishment worthy of the best traditions of the glorious Japanese army. The union of the Japanese and American armies will more closely unite the friendly nations."

The American teachers of a generation ago are proud of their pupils. They who wrought hardest as comrades have faith in each other.

Now comes on the new cabinet in Japan. At the head is the premier, Kei Hara, Japan's most famous journalist, veteran statesman and diplomatist, and since Ito, the head of the Sei-yu-Kei. This, by far the most powerful party, represents, in the main, the solid, commercial interests of the empire, and is pronounced in fostering cordial relations with America. Unless all past precedents and present signs fail, Premier Hara is better fitted for the problems in hand and the greater ones of the near future, than a soldier, like Terauchi, could possibly be. Hara has ever been stalwart in his ideas of developing the resources of Japan, of keeping the trade routes to Europe open, and of definitely maintaining friendship with the Allied nations.

To fictionists of all sorts there may be Orient and Occident; to the scholar and the practical man the world is one, and "above all nations is humanity."

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